. 1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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787 with the candle before it. He next does the same before the *ogan*, then before each of the drums in order, continuing to dance before the drums, usually with great violence, while the few "social" dancers who still may be circling about the center pole make way so that he may execute his steps. Gradually his dancing becomes calmed, until he is taken either to the *maison de servitude* or to a near-by house, where he rests and if, as often happens, he has rolled on muddy ground during his possession, washes and changes his clothes.

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159 Several examples of the force of this tradition of being "mounted" by the *loa* may be given. One of these which is of especial interest concerns the possession of a man of good education, in the early thirties, who throughout his childhood and early manhood had had no association with the *vodun* cult, but had been encouraged by his family and his own ambition to promote the activities of the Catholic Church. In discussing his earlier experiences and background with one of his intimates, it seemed that on the side of both father and mother many of his relatives were affiliated with the cult, and it was recounted how, at an important ceremony at his ancestral habitation, some years before, he had become possessed. But it was also made clear that he had not been any the less active in the affairs of the Church because of this transient experience, nor had he affiliated himself in any way with any *vodun* group. Why he wished once more to participate in the *vodun* rituals cannot be said; certainly during the weeks immediately preceding his possession he had become interested in the philosophy of *vodun*, and his non-voduistic, if not anti-voduistic background seemed to accentuate his interest in ascertaining the hold of these rites, which had always been presented to him as repellent, on their followers. As an example of the duality of his interest, it may be stated that though he had remarked how "disgusting" it was to roll in the mud when possessed by Damballa, he had also been im-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba.

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: "If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it!" as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to "settle" his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself:

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa	Damballa-o, Damballa
Wedo,	Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

J: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3 Mythology

796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backward
787 toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued
793 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
●159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[788] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily [illegible] *see* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his [533] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a [534] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

L: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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given him a piercing glance, not without significance, for as the man, who believed himself the victim of the *hungan's* machinations, said, "Whatever you believe, these *hungans* have some kind of power. . . ." On his arrival at the dance where the possession occurred, the *hungan* had encountered this man sitting alone, some distance from the *tonnelle*. Giving him a drink of liquor, the *hungan*, as he pressed his hand in greeting, sportively turned him about in the manner in which possession is induced. After this the man recollected but little; he did not remember having said he would accept the god, or circling backwards, or bowing to the drums when the "salutes" were played. He dimly remembered having been sent to the *barrière* with some liquor for Bosu, who, not a Rada *loa*, had come unauthorized to one of the spectators and, according to custom, had been removed from the dancing-place. He also just recalled that a woman had become possessed by Legba, but did not know that it was when she touched him that his own possession had begun. The remainder of the night's experience was completely blank, even though the actual state of possession occupied only a small part of it.

Later during the dance, when he had returned, he was heard to say: "It was not a pretty trick that the *hungan* played on me"—a feeling not assuaged when, the next morning at mass, the priest in his sermon preached against following false gods and recounted the miseries in store for those who desert the true faith; nor when he reflected that, by his possession, he had in a sense become affiliated with a group whose position in society was anything but such as to enhance his own social status. The *hungan*, however, promised him that he would not bring on another possession, adding, as an aside: "It is good, though, that a Haitian should have this experience." None the less, to make sure that this *loa bossal* would not come to him at awkward moments, it was going to be necessary for him to baptize it, thus continuing the process which

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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some termed his "Haitianization." There were those who expressed surprise at the occurrence, but the majority held that though this man had himself been a devout follower of the Church, and his parents before him, Damballa was a *loa* of his family, and therefore it was reasonable that it should come to him when called at a dance.

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Another "unauthorized" possession, that of a woman in mourning, was also witnessed. Like the *service* of one night's duration, which this dance followed, it was but poorly organized and provided for, and in this it reflected the status of the family, which had but few resources, since its head had recently come into the valley and therefore lacked the backing which only his own relationship group could give him. Here there was no *maison de servitude*, and the *tonnelle* had been erected in an open field where the only shelter was offered by a crude hut near by. The *hungan* did not appear until late, while the host lived up to his reputation by drinking more *clairin* than was good for him. None the less, one violent possession by a *loa bossal* occurred relatively early in the evening, though the *loa* concerned did not "announce himself" through the song of the one he had possessed.

The woman in mourning sang continuously as she sat among the spectators, and since she was not supposed to dance, she executed dance movements in place. As the drumming became more and more *chaud* — "hot" — she became correspondingly more excited until, suddenly leaping from her seat, she began a frenzied dance. She refused the water and candle, however, and when finished with her dancing, she fell exhausted into her chair, where she remained in a coma during the next hour. She roused herself later and again joined the singing, but though she was near possession, this never came on. Her *loa*, like the other *loa bossal* that came earlier in the evening, did not "announce itself," and since it was her first — and not unwelcome — possession, she stated that at the termination of her period of mourning she would

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa boussal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *hunsi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the ogan lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first vodun dance after the ex-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10A] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

[10A] Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264. Cf. p. 351, Category 11b. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.

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The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages. The prêt' savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is omitted.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to [467] matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, [362] since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 669 643 • 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 [433] Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power.

Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

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Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had welcomed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

15. In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

16. The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

175 643 ● 159 IF ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

175 642 643 The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. ● 159 Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his
159 bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator,
Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion 643
was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if 159
a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land.

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy 175
flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant 423
socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. 178
Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way.

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enraciner chez tous l'amour du sol.*"

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IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 668 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

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already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor.

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillustrious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

4. Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, [illegible], President, don't make a fool of me."

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines.

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti.

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them.

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license:

> Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

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In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

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11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000. the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Memoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.